



TESTIMONY BEFORE
HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND
INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

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MAY 25, 2006

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Mr. Payne, and Honorable Members of Congress, my name is Sean Callahan. I am vice -president for Overseas Operations at Catholic Relief Services (CRS), for whom I have worked in the US and overseas for 18 years.

CRS is among the largest, most experienced and most effective users of emergency and development food aid provided by the people of the United States. We represent the 65 million member Catholic Community in a 52-year-long partnership with Food for Peace that expresses like nothing else the compassion and good will of the American people.

Today let me sketch the global requirements for aid and then discuss the key role of food aid in public diplomacy. Then I would I like to summarize related issues, which demonstrate or affect the role of private voluntary organizations like CRS in global food aid.

Global Requirements of Adequate Food Aid

We face a severe challenge in responding to the grim requirements posed by global hunger. The UN estimates 852 million people are undernourished worldwide. According to USDA, 83 million people live on less than 1,100 calories a day. Six million people will die of hunger related causes this year. According to the United Nations, 25,000 people a day die of hunger related causes. They are too weak to fight off flu or the effects of diarrhea. They are underweight infants and overwhelmed mothers. They die quietly, off camera, unnoticed by the rest of the world.

To provide a nutrition supplement to the most undernourished 10 percent of the world's population would cost \$3.3 Billion a year. An authorization of \$2 billion a year in the 2007 Farm Bill for PL 480 Title II would meet 60% of these needs. We would expect European, Asian and even African donors to make up the remaining shortfall.

The U.S. share of total global food aid has ranged from 40% in the early 1990s to approximately 60% in recent years. The U.S. food aid contributions for PL 480 Title II (regular appropriations plus supplementals) have neared or exceeded \$2 Billion several times since 2001.

This is not a large amount in historical terms either. If we adjust for inflation, in real dollars the United States spent more than \$8 billion a year in food aid during the mid-60s. In 1988 the Congress passed and President Ronald Reagan signed a measure that stated that food aid should not be less than one-third of all United States foreign economic assistance. We can't expect you to match one-third of the FY 07 Foreign Operations budget for development and economic assistance with food aid. But if we were to honor the spirit of the law, we would have the \$2 billion in annual appropriations, an amount necessary for Title II to meet the most urgent emergency needs while preserving our ability to carry out quality, sustainable development programs.

I worry that when we need to be increasing our efforts, we are cutting back. At the World Food Summit in 1996 attendees pledged to cut hunger by 50% by the year 2015. Instead of cutting hunger in half – donor countries have cut assistance in half. The amount of food aid committed dropped from 15 million metric tons to 7 million metric tons from 1996 to 2004. To the US Government's credit, in the face of reduced contributions from some countries, Title II funding has ranged from \$1.6 billion to \$2 billion in recent years.

However, to meet increasing emergency food aid commitments, USAID is reducing from 32 to 15 the number of countries in which it supports development food aid. CRS will be forced to close feeding programs in eight countries. Up to 2 million program beneficiaries will be unable to access a school meal, participate in health programs or supplement their meager incomes with food for work. Even more sadly, we will need to find new ways with reduced resources to support long-term partners such as Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity.

The Key Role for Food Aid in Public Diplomacy

Section 12 of the 9/11 Commission Report includes numerous references to the need for the United States to communicate its basic values and its humanitarian concerns. The commission called upon us to create "opportunities for people to improve the lives of their families and to enhance the prospects for their children's success."

Food aid communicates our humanitarian spirit while improving people's lives and prospects – each bag is marked with a USAID logo and the words, "Gift from the people of the United States."

Within the context of public diplomacy, food aid bridges the gap between cultures. CRS is an American face on thousands of tons of food aid delivered to Muslim populations in Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Southern Sudan, Senegal, Northern Ghana and elsewhere. As an American organization, our presence reinforces the message that the food aid used in school feeding programs and well baby clinics comes from the American people.

When we stay the course, great changes happen.

Food aid works best when it is part of longer term, multi-year programs aimed at making generational changes. Examples of the generational approach are food assisted child survival coupled with a school-feeding program carried out within the same village over the course of a decade. Together these programs boost immunization rates, improve child nutrition and improve school attendance. They result in a generation of healthy and educated parents whose children are even better fed, better educated and healthier.

The danger today is that we don't stay the course. It is too tempting to take a "hot spot" approach to food aid. The hot spot approach throws resources at the CNN disaster of the month, depriving resources from the quieter, school feeding, child survival and natural resource management programs that work more effectively in the long-term.

More than \$2 million in Title II resources were diverted this year from Haiti alone to meet other more noticeable hot spots such as Sudan. The point is that we need resources for both struggling countries. Saving Peter by starving Paul is a recipe for disaster. Naturally, the federal government cannot shoulder the burden by itself but it must do more.

Last year CRS used millions of dollars of privately raised cash to plug holes in the US food aid pipelines to Niger and Southern Africa. We raise millions of dollars each year from private citizens and foundations to feed the hungry. We can augment the Title II pipeline – but we can't replace it.

The Critical Role of PVOs in Effective Programs

Mr., Chairman, I next want to highlight this morning the effectiveness of PL 480 Title II feeding programs and the need for this committee to support a \$2 billion authorization for Title II. This level will allow the U.S. to meet our share of relief and development commitments around the world. This \$2 billion level needs to be authorized and appropriated "up front" in the budget process and not be done piecemeal through an under funded regular bill followed by one or more supplemental appropriations.

CRS supports protecting a core level no less than \$500 million (of the \$2 billion above) of Title II funding for ongoing, multi-year programs that address the causes of chronic food insecurity and enable communities to build better coping mechanisms in the face of recurring disasters. The practice to date has been for annual emergency needs, beyond planned levels, to be met by taking from on-going multi-year food security programs.

Food aid is an effective means of addressing both chronic and acute food insecurity in emergency situations and when carrying out development and social safety net programs. Annual results reports consistently show increases in vaccinations, girls' graduation rates, school attendance and crop yields and decreases in rates of malnutrition. Evaluations of CRS Title II programs between 2001 and 2004 showed the following results:

- ✓ Yields increased by an average of 43%
- ✓ More than 1 million students enrolled and receiving a school meal

- ✓ Primary School graduation rates up 42% with an 86% increase in girls' graduation in Burkina Faso
- ✓ An average of a 60% increase in vaccination rates among under-three-year-olds
- ✓ An average of 86% increase in exclusive breastfeeding of infants during the first six months of life, greatly improving their chances of survival.

Not only are CRS programs measuring positive results; they are accountable for the resources used to achieve the results. Each year our programs are audited by the USAID Inspector General and by our internal auditors.

Most importantly, the very effectiveness of programs managed by CRS and other private voluntary organizations (PVOs) helps advance US public diplomacy. Beneficiaries in both friendly and contentious nations recognize and appreciate the American contribution in fighting hunger.

I have seen this time and again in my travels for CRS across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Threats to PVO Participation in Global Food Aid

To ensure the effectiveness of our public diplomacy, I urge the Committee to monitor the work of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) in global trade talks.

We first must keep in mind that humanitarian food aid programs are in danger today because they are on the negotiating table at the Doha round of World Trade Organization (WTO) talks. The American people's ability to offer a hand up to the needy should not be a bargaining chip in agriculture trade negotiations with other countries

CRS supports balanced trade liberalization through the WTO while also creating a preferential option for poor countries. The USTR should seek inclusion of tariffs, quotas and other protective measures that enable poor countries the time to develop local economic and trade capacity.

The USTR further needs to assure that food aid remains available to both international organizations and private voluntary organizations for emergency, multi-year development and social safety net programming.

Food aid flows should be monitored by an independent body with PVO and WFP representation that succeeds the Consultative Subcommittee on Surplus Disposal (CSSD) in FAO. The WTO is not the correct body to set regulations on food aid flows and as such should not be tasked with the monitoring of such flows. Further, it is critical that the Doha Round negotiators refrain from taking any actions that result in a decline in food aid availability.

While the USTR negotiates for robust food aid, the US can unilaterally advance food aid. We will go a long way to meeting our Millennium Development Goal of halving world hunger if we take the lead in honoring donor commitments to the Food Aid Convention. These commitments dropped from 7.5 million metric tons in 1986 to 4.8 million metric tons in 1999. The US should lead the other donor nations in reaching the 10 million metric tons target of the

original Food Aid Convention, and then encourage even more robust contributions by an expanded donor community.

Changes Needed in U.S. Participation in Global Food Aid

In addition to changes in food aid monitoring noted before, CRS also supports a change in the 1999 Food Aid Convention (FAC). The modification will elicit greater contributions of cash and in-kind food aid worldwide and expand representation of donor and recipient countries, as well as International Organizations and PVOs, in food aid deliberations

Most emergencies do not have a rapid onset. They result from poor governance, failed rains, heavy rains, seasonal pests and ongoing conflicts. Donors, policymakers and aid agencies do not acknowledge most emergencies until they reach an acute stage. There is a general tendency to ignore the warning signs and the initial onset. But we can see them coming. If it rains hard during the monsoon season in China and Nepal, floodgates of dams will be opened and there will be flooding in Bangladesh and India. If there is El Niño in the Pacific, there will probably be droughts in Africa.

Resources were not committed last year when it was apparent to the food aid community that the drought would worsen the food security of millions of people in Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia. Niger is once again off the radar screen. However, more than 2 million people were financially ruined in last year's emergency. Today they lack the resources to feed their families and rebuild their lives. Our failure or inability to act costs people their lives and makes the lives of those who survive more difficult and shorter than they need to be in the 21st century.

Thus, we need to recognize the need for a robust FY 06 Supplemental Appropriation that provides \$600 million more. At the same time, we must press towards a target of \$2 billion for Title II in FY 07.

To date, the Supplemental includes only \$350 million and the House-passed FY 07 Agriculture Appropriations bill provides only \$1.2 billion for Title II. I fear that we are on a collision course with famine.

Meanwhile, the concentration on acute rather than chronic needs is one of the factors contributing to the shortening of intervals between emergencies. I have witnessed this in Ethiopia and parts of Southern Africa. The Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust (BEHT) is designed to meet immediate emergency needs and prevent emergency programs from using the resources of development and safety net programs. There has not been adequate funding to replenish the BEHT, leading to disruptions in emergency, development and safety net programs.

CRS supports the restructuring of emergency response mechanisms so that aid can be delivered quickly and effectively. The Bill Emerson Humanitarian Trust should be used first to forestall taking food from ongoing multi-year Title II development programs. The replenishment mechanism for the Trust needs to be streamlined and made automatic – as opposed to requiring an appropriation.

It was reported in the Economist magazine that investing \$1 in emergency preparedness and mitigation through development programs would save \$7 in emergency response. Not doing the development programming often results in needing to respond to an emergency situation, and often the delay in responding to the emergency means that it is much larger than if we'd been able to mobilize the resources at the first sign of trouble.

In conclusion, not funding development programs is short sighted. If we won't pay now, we all will pay later. I ask you once again to commit to a PL 480 Title II authorization level of \$2 billion for FY 07 and beyond. It will save time. It will save money. And it will save lives. This modest investment will also advance public diplomacy in areas of conflict and tension.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be pleased to respond to any questions that the Committee may have.